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WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

We hear a hymn, which is called a Tropar, sung many times during the Nativity season. But what does it mean? Is it a misprint "Sun" of righteousness instead of "Son." Or is it right? And what is Orient from on high? The tropar reads:

"Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, Glory to Thee!"

This tropar develops the theme of the Magi from Matthew 2:1-11: three men of high rank looking for the King of Jews. They are astronomers and represent the scientists of antiquity. They are taught by the stars, and because of a star, they set out in search of a newborn king. Instead, they find a child lying on straw. They had told Herod that they wanted to pay homage to the King of the Jews, but when they find the child they are filled with great joy; and instead of merely doing formal homage, they adore Him. They then offer their gifts: gold for a king, frankincense for God, and myrrh for a mortal man.

These wisemen who came from the East found Truth itself, which they had previously sought in the stars. Now they recognize the sun of Righteousness, the "Orient from on high" which has come down from heaven. But this heaven is not the same one which was formed in the first day of creation, the one in which stars revolve. These stars could only give a partial knowledge to the Magi. This star is different! The Sun of Righteousness is uncreated. The Light of Knowledge reveals God

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WHY "CHRIST IS BORN"

On Pascha/Easter the joyous, thoughtful sermon of St. John Chrysostom is read in all Orthodox Churches. But few of us have ever heard his sermon on the Nativity/Birth of Christ. Its structure is similar to the more familiar one and in it he eloquently combines the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church. How wonderful to get the full meaning of this great day. For this is why: "Christ is born! Glorify Him!

"Come, then, let us observe the feast! Come and we shall commemorate the solemn festival. It is a strange manner of celebrating a festival; but truly wonderful is the whole story of the nativity. For on this day, the ancient slavery is ended; the devil confounded; the demons take to flight; the power of death is broken; paradise is unlocked; the curse is taken away; sin is removed from us; error driven out; truth has been brought back; the speech of kindness diffused and spread on every side; a heavenly way of life has been implanted on the world; angels communicate with men without fear and men now hold speech with angels.

"Why is this? Because God is now on earth and man in heaven; on every

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FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 1955

We continued printing the history of the church in North America by Dr. Basil Bensin. From 1907-1914, the church was headed by Archbishop Platon. During his tenure, 40 churches in the U.S. and 10 churches in Canada were added to the rolls. Charles R. Crane, an American millionaire, who was a great lover of Russian liturgical music, sponsored a choir from Russia, which gave concerts all over America. At the invitation of President Wilson, they even gave a concert at the White House, which was attended by members of the Cabinet and Diplomatic Corps. The choir was directed by John T. Gorokhoff, who was a graduate of Kursk Theological Seminary. The Archbishop started social services for the many immigrants who were coming to the U.S. It included a home at 347 East 14th Street in New York City. The theological seminary was transferred from Minneapolis, MN to Tenafly, NJ in 1912 and uniform standard statues were prepared by Fr. A. Hotovitsky, under Archbishop Platon's direction to help govern the church. Unfortunately, just prior to World War I, several priests left the U.S. for Russia. Among them were Archimandrite Arseny (Chagovetz), who is now being considered for canonization and an instructor of the seminary, Basil Bensin, who wrote these notes for "The Herald" in 1955.

It was interesting to note that 15 parishes were added to the Packet Plan. Most of them are still with us but their pastors are now of blessed memory. Jeanette, PA (Fr. Felenchak), Mishawaka, IN (Fr. Hanchar), Waterbury, CT (Fr. Dzubay), McKeesport, PA (Fr. Kreta), Portland,

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CHRONOLOGY

DECEMBER 2005

EIGHTY YEARS AGO in November 1924, the Ecumenical Patriarch granted autocephaly to Poland's Orthodox Church, which now has 570,000 members in six eparchies, 230 priests and 320 churches, seven monasteries/convents, one seminary and many flourishing youth and charity organizations. The Orthodox Church took a blow after World War II, when parishes and clergy numbers were cut by nine-tenths because of border changes. Also in 1938-39, 400 churches were destroyed or taken over by the Roman Catholic Church. Although the Orthodox Church still faces problems of acceptance in Poland, it is now legally protected as a minority church by a law of 1991. In May 2004, the Orthodox Church won the right to reclaim properties seized under communist rule without going through protracted procedures.

AN ORTHODOX PRIEST AND A FATHER OF A VICTIM have traveled from Limasol, Cyprus to Chelyabinsk, Russia to investigate the slave-trade and sex-traffic after the death of Oksana in Cyprus. The 25-year-old university student from Russia had been hired to work in Cyprus in legitimate work but found herself a victim of the sextrade. Father Savva and Oksana's father have organized a shelter for former sex-slaves and promise protection, material and spiritual support and legal help to all who were recruited by deceit.

TAPS is a tragedy assistance program to aid survivors of those affected by the death of a loved one serving in the armed services. Parent, sibling, spouse, significant other, friend, child or co-worker of military casualties are all welcome to find special friendship and comfort through TAPS. For info call 800-959-TAPS or www.taps.org. A newsletter Journeys is also published. Call 800-854-3402 for subscription.

THE JERUSALEM PATRIARCHATE is establishing new parishes and assigning priests who are fluent in Russian or other Slavic languages to fill the need of the Russian-speaking Orthodox in Jerusalem, who now outnumber the Orthodox Arabs.

ST. SAVA CAMP in Shadeland, OH was the site of the 2nd annual Diocese Days in August. The two-day event was planned for the faithful of the Eastern Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church to meet for worship, fellowship and fun. The theme this year was "Called to be Orthodox" with programs for different age groups focused on how people answer the call.

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP has developed an essential collection of resources to help young people stay connected to the church during their college years. The Connect Kit has many resources and information to help them in connecting and growing in their faith. What a beautiful gift from a godparent, parent or aunt or uncle! For info call 800-919-1OCF or www.ocf.net or write: OCF, PO Box 300249, Boston, MA 02130.

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY, PO Box 1949, Hollywood, CA 90078-1949 provides counseling, prayer and icon cards and other religious items to the incarcerated. In the past few years in the USA a greater percentage of inmates are women. In Russia in the Nizhni Novgorod region, which has 19 colonies, half of the women inmates join a monastic community upon release. They are assigned to specific churches. A priest is assigned to each colony where he hears confessions, talks to people and edifies them in the faith. Almost every parish in the diocese is involved in charity activities and provides the inmates with clothes, medicine, food and literature.

A CATHOLIC-ORTHODOX ALLIANCE to negotiate with European institutions has been suggested by Bishop Hilarion of Vienna and Austria, the Russian Orthodox representative to the European Union. "Europe has so rapidly de-Christianized that urgent action is needed to save it from losing its centuries-old Christian identity."

ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE in Ligonier, PA has released the schedule for December and January. On the 10th of December, a day filled with activities for all ages is planned. From the 26th to the 31st the National Conferences of Orthodox Christian Fellowships will meet. This is open to college-aged students. A New Year's Eve party on December 31 is open to all. Winter Camps are scheduled from January 13-16, February 17th to 20th. For info call 724/238-3677 or e-mail: avcenter@antiochian.org

THE SECOND ANNUAL MATUSHKA DAY was held on May 19 in the Voronezh Diocese in Russia. Wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of the local clergy participated. A choir made up of participants sang the Divine Liturgy, which was organized by Metropolitan Sergiy. Activities included lectures on Christian service and social work. Displays of needlework and culinary items were enjoyed.

THE HEADQUARTERS of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church – also known as Eastern Rite Catholics – has been moved from Lviv to Kiev. The move is unpopular with the Orthodox and many gathered in protest at the official announcement.

THE RUSSIAN LITURGICAL-FOLK SINGERS, with George Margitich as conductor, have released a new CD, digitally remastered of selections of Russian Sacred Music and folk songs from a 1973 original recording. Send $15 for postpaid CD to Helen Margitich, PO Box 1285, Montclair, NJ 07042.

(Continued from front page)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Himself. The Orient from on high who makes Himself known to the Magi is the divine Word who was with God in the beginning Who is Himself God before all ages (John 1:1). He is One Who existed before time and before creation of all matter.

O Lord, Glory to Thee!

(Continued from front page)

WHY "CHRIST IS BORN"

side all things commingle. He has come on earth while being whole in heaven, and while complete in heaven, he is without diminution on earth. Though being the impassable Word, He became flesh that He might dwell among us. He became flesh; He did not become God; He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive! He was placed in a manger, so that He, by Whom all things are nourished may receive an infant's food from His virgin mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the magi may more easily see Him."

(Continued from front page)

FIFTY YEARS AGO

OR (Fr. Gizetti), Frackville, PA (Fr. Gambal), Ellwood City, PA (Fr. Besmertniuk), Stratford, CT (Fr. Antoniuk), Steubenville, OH (Fr. Chumak), Philadelphia, PA (Fr. Gougnin), Mt. Carmel, PA (Fr. Didick), Stamford, CT (Fr. Metropolsky), Canonsburg, PA (Fr. Fedetz), Chicago, IL (Fr. Solanka), St. Paul, MN (Fr. Kruchek).

Did we foresee the great part computers would play in our lives? We wrote about Mark IV which was Harvard University's newest brain. Since there are about 4600 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, Mark IV was to be given the task of determining which ones more accurately compared to the originals.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Some people think that the teachings of Christ are extremely difficult and that we would be foolish to even try to practice them. They are partly correct. The teachings of Christ are not only difficult ... they are impossible for those whose life has not changed, casting off the old nature and putting on a new one! As Orthodox Christians, we could not possibly live according to the teachings of Christ unless we lived in the spiritual realm of the grace of God. Christian morality is not a matter of human efforts trying to measure up to the highest standards ever imaginable, which would always end up in failure, but it is an expression of a way of life in union with Christ through which we receive forgiveness and enabling power to live according to Jesus' teachings!

Did you know that the core of the Good News of Christ is not a set of ethical standards, but it is the kingdom of God which dawns through the person and ministry of Christ? Jesus proclaimed: *"I came to set the earth on fire* (Luke 12:49)!" This fire is the fire of God's grace through which the new age begins! The revolutionary power of Christianity is an infusion of grace. Jesus lived, taught and acted in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles preached and served others by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Each Christian lives by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Thus Christian morality cannot be viewed in isolation from our total life as baptized Christians, who are here and now citizens of God's Kingdom, and live by the power of God's grace.

All the specific acts, teachings and commands of Jesus should be related to His central message about the presence of the Kingdom of God in our lives. His healing and exorcisms are signs of the powers of God's Kingdom against the powers of Satan's kingdom. Jesus' parables illustrate various aspects of God's Kingdom, what it is, how it comes in our midst and how people are to receive it and conduct themselves in it. The teachings and commandments of Jesus, such as love, serving others, carrying one's cross and the like, all are principles and truths of God's Kingdom. Jesus' gifts of forgiveness, healing and new life to us are gifts of God's Kingdom. In prayer and worship, we celebrate and experience the presence of God's Kingdom. When the Divine Liturgy begins, the priest says, "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages!" The teachings of Christ are meant for those who have repented of their sins, who have accepted by faith to enter into the spiritual sphere of God's Kingdom and practice principles, and who seek to grow in this new life in union with Christ.

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KITCHEN CORNER

powder, salt, ground ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Set aside. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light. Gradually beat in the eggs and molasses. Add the flour mixture until just combined. Dissolve the baking soda in the boiling water and add to batter, stirring well. Pour into prepared pan and place on heated cookie sheet in the heated oven. Bake until top is firm when gently pressed. Check after 20 minutes, bake longer if necessary. Cool on rack. Remove from pan when cool.

To make glaze: Chop the crystallized ginger very fine. Add 2 Tbls. of it to the confectioners sugar and lemon juice. Mix until smooth. Add more sugar if too thin or milk, a teaspoon at a time, if too thick.

Decorate the top of cake with glaze and sprinkle with remaining crystallized ginger. Keeps well at room temperature for at least three days.

PRESS FUND

Spasebo/Thank You to: Anonymous, Anne Dorozynski, Irene Allen, Catherine Shaffchick, Betty Zbegner, Lubov Dechio, Sophia Greene, Ethel Watlock, Flora Markham. Marie Derkasch in memory of her husband William. Anonymous in memory of Olga Krasofsky.

SAD

The western edge of Ukraine around Uzhorod is one of the most impoverished places on the European continent. Here the Carpathian Mountains form both a natural barrier between the former USSR and Europe – and an economic dividing line between desperation and hope.

Most of the young adults in these mountain villages have left in order to work illegally in Central and Western Europe. Others leave for the agricultural region of southern Ukraine for several months to dig potatoes or pull onions. When it came time to be paid, the farmers had no money, so several of my relatives were paid in wheat.

Those who leave the country to work as undocumented migrants often work long hours for small wages and below their educational level. When they wish to return home to see the children and families they have left behind, they often have to bribe officials and pay off organized crime members, which cuts into what little they have saved to bring back to their families.

According to Amy Heyden, director of a Program at Winrock International in the U.S., "Ukrainian migrant workers abroad have a 50-50 chance that they will be able to earn enough to send money home. Meanwhile, migration is causing a breakdown in the moral fabric of Ukrainian communities. There has been a sharp increase in divorce and abandoned children. It is a painful dilemma. On the one hand, families desperately need the income from working abroad, but it is forcing a great many children to grow up without their parents."

Valery Padyak, a publisher and sociologist from Uzhorod, says: "The classic scenario is someone going abroad to work illegally in bad conditions for very low wages. When they get there, they are paid maybe half of what they were promised, and sometimes the mafia takes even that. Many workers are held in a slavery-like condition in forced labor. But still, they keep going back. You can't just sit here doing nothing and watch your children go hungry."

It has not been that long ago that starvation was forced upon the people by Stalin. Now, the country has been free for over 10 years and hunger is again prevalent.

FUNDS

ALASKA: Anonymus, Ethel Watlock
ALASKA AND MISSION: Marie Derkasch in memory of her husband William
POSTAGE: Margaret Chervenko, James McJilton, Roger Hauge, Mary Zacharkiw, Olga Komenko, Helen Miller, Musya Sakovich, Marie Derkasch in memory of husband William

WALK IN LOVE

In Ephesians 5:2 we read: "Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself..." What does it mean to "walk in love"? It means that we continually do the little acts of kindness that can make life bearable and better for another person. Part of this walk is the giving of self as we read that "(He) has given of Himself."

One practical way to express our love costs only a postage stamp – plus paper, ink, and a little thought or it could be the time needed to send an e-mail or to make a phone call.

All of us have had the nudge to write an unexpected note that could brighten another's day or to send that e-mail or make that phone call. Perhaps it is a note of appreciation, an expression of concern, a compliment for a task well done, or just a "thinking of you" expression.

Too often the letter goes unwritten and the impulse is unexpressed. We may then convince ourselves that we don't have the time or that our reaching out will not be appreciated.

Certainly we can think of someone who needs a word of encouragement, thanks, or a reminder that we are praying for them. "Walk in love" to the mailbox, computer or phone today.

It was only a brief little note,
A word that was prayerfully spoken,
Yet not in vain, for it soothed pain
Of a heart that was nearly broken.

BEWARE OF ENVY

Envy may be defined as "resentment at the success or happiness of others often accompanied with some degree of hatred or spite." It often springs from the fact that another has obtained what one has a strong desire to possess or accomplish.

Unfortunately, many regard envy lightly as if it is to be expected or perfectly normal behavior. Many ads appeal to this trait encouraging us to buy their product so that we can become the envy of our neighborhood or workplace.

The Bible views envy quite differently, calling it "rottenness to the bones" (Proverbs 14:30). It was out of envy that the religious leaders sought to kill Jesus (Matthew 27:20). In Galatians 5:19-26, envy is listed among the life-destroying "works of the flesh." In Church school we learn that envy (jealousy) is one of the seven mortal sins.

Why is envy so dangerous? We are given a good example in 1 Samuel 18 where envy contributed to the downfall of King Saul. He had begun his rule well, but because he disobeyed God's command he was rejected as king (15:23). Instead of humbly accepting God's decision, he became consumed with envy and hatred toward David (18:8-9). From then on, Saul distanced himself from God and even sought counsel from a medium (28:7). In the end, he took his own life following a shameful defeat by the Philistines (31:4-5). Envy had destroyed him.

Envy can ruin your life. Never take it lightly! As one Russian proverb tells us: "When you turn green with envy, You are ripe for trouble!"

* * * * * *

We often find the phoenix in the carving of an ikonastas. It is a symbol of Christian resurrection. According to legend the bird lived for five hundred to a thousand years, consumed itself by fire, and then rose again. Early Christians adopted the image as a symbol of both Christ's and their own future resurrection.

Memories

A Valuable Lesson

The most valuable lessons we learned in our lives were probably not discovered in a classroom but were taught by our first teachers – our parents. We may have acquired this wisdom through instruction or example. For me, one such lesson came by way of a story.

It was the early years of the Depression and a very difficult time in the country and especially for the Russian Orthodox Church in Lorain. The parish was almost lost due to serious financial difficulties, and a priest usually stayed only a few weeks or months depending on if or when the parish could afford to pay his salary.

Despite the problems, the parish choir was very good, and it had a number of outstanding voices. Although not professionally trained, they used their natural talents as they sang from their hearts to give glory to God.

It was at this time that plans were made for a concert at the local high school. That evening our choir would share the stage with St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Cathedral choir. My mother sang alto in Ss. Peter and Paul's choir.

There was not much to look forward to in the poor, struggling parish as plans were made for the event. The choir had numerous practices as hymns and folk songs were fine-tuned. And something added to their excitement – choir members would be wearing costumes. Baba made my mother's Russian peasant blouse and black skirt. My aunt still remembers how beautiful the blouse was and how she was in awe of my mother. At that time, it was quite impressive to be chosen to sing in a concert on the stage at Lorain High School. That was especially true if you were from an immigrant family which lived in South Lorain, commonly known as Hunkytown.

The night of the concert the large auditorium was filled to capacity. This was the Depression, and people, in general, found an evening out at a church-sponsored concert to be a very special event.

Although she was only a little girl of five, the oldest daughter of Lorain's choir director still remembers that night. "I'd never seen such beautiful costumes…and they (the Cathedral choir) sang like angels. The professionally-directed choir not only dazzled the audience with their voices but with their authentic Russian costumes. They not only impressed a little girl in the audience but a young teenager waiting in the wings.

As the two choirs mingled backstage during intermission, my mother, just 15, shyly approached a woman from Cleveland. After commenting on how well the guest choir sang, my mother shared a concern. "Your choir is so big, and ours is so small." Mom never forgot the kind woman's response: "My dear, it's not the quantity but the quality that counts." My mom had been feeling as if they were not good enough, but this woman, another Orthodox Christian, had lifted her spirits and had given Mom a new outlook on life. She was no longer embarrassed by her simple peasant costume or their small church choir. A great deal of love and care had gone into the making of her embroidered blouse. And their choir more than made up for their size with members who sang straight from their hearts. My mother went on to greatly enjoy the memorable evening and the experience – and so did a very appreciative audience.

Years later, my mother recalled and shared this story more than once. The message was simple but powerful: it's not the quantity but the quality that counts. It <u>is</u> the quality of our lives, how we live our lives and how we treat others, that's important – not how much we have.

During the depression, most people didn't have much in the way of money or possessions. But, for those early immigrants who relied on the Church for their spiritual, educational, and social needs, there was a quality of life that is missing today.

I am grateful for many things in my life, but, most of all, I am grateful for my parents and the lessons they taught me.

Margaret Pysarchyk

Please send your MEMORIES to Margaret Pysarchyk at 2125 Garfield St., Lorain, OH 44055 or mpysarchyk@hotmail.com

A GENEALOGY

It is quite fashionable at this time to do a genealogy of one's family. The search is somewhat simplified by the use of the computer.

On the Sunday prior to Christmas, we read the genealogy of Jesus Christ from Matthew 1:1-25. If there is a Bible Study class, the instructor is invariably asked about the other genealogy in Luke 3:23-38. Which is right since they differ so greatly?

St. Luke begins with Joseph and traces the lineage of Jesus back to the first man Adam, while St. Matthew begins with Abraham and traces Jesus' lineage through both Abraham and King David.

Luke's genealogy includes only men, while Matthew includes both men and women. Women are not usually named in Jewish genealogy so the mention of Thamar, Rachab, Ruth, and the wife of Urias must have been included for some reason. One of these is that they were all Gentiles and their names in the lists foreshadow the inclusion of non-Jews in the people of God.

Luke and Matthew wrote their genealogies with different purposes in mind; and, therefore, we should not be surprised that there are differences between the two genealogies.

We must remember that the genealogies of Jesus did not appear out of nowhere. The Jews were very careful and particular in preserving their genealogies so that there is little doubt that both genealogies were taken from well-known and probably public records.

SOBORNOST

ELECTION OF BISHOPS

(Canon 6 of the Council of Nicea (324) gave special privileges to Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. This was amended at the Council of Constantinople held in 381 when canon 3 extended these to the bishop of the imperial capital)

The connection affirmed by canon 3 between the "privilege of honor" granted to the bishop of Constantinople, and the fact that the city was the "New Rome" was implied that the "privileges had no geographical limits: "Rome" was always synonymous with universality. The bishop of the capital was not, therefore, simply a "bishop over a diocese" (*iper dioikesin episkopos*) as his colleagues of Alexandria and Antioch, endowed with regional primacies. However, the nature of his – implicitly universal – "privileges" was not further defined. One would have to wait until the Council of Chalcedon (451) to find such a definition.

And there is another point on which the brief text of canon 3 lacks clarity: the relationship between the **two** Romes. The realistic logic which motivated the canon seemed to require that "New" Rome, which was the actual capital of the Empire – receive primacy over the "Old." Nevertheless, the canon specifies that its privileges place the bishop of Constantinople **after** his Roman colleague.

We need only to recall the sermon of St. Gregory Nazianzen, of this very time period, in which he refers to Constantinople as "the first city after the first of all cities." Canon 3 of the Second Council is, therefore, in complete conformity with the principles established at Nicea I, at least as far as the Eastern primacies are concerned. The Council of Chalcedon, on the other hand, will give a whole new meaning to this notion.

Fr. Michael Dahulich, Ph.D.
Dean - St. Tikhon's Seminary
So. Canaan, PA

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Forbidden fruits create many jams.

WINTER'S GRACE

We can receive guidance from Psalm 71:9 when we can ask with the psalmist "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." Old age is the time when we can give ourselves to know God better and cultivating character traits that make us more like Him.

"Now when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." (Ps 71:18)

Age breaks down our strength and energy and strips us of our busyness. It's God's way of getting us to slow down so we'll take more time for him. We can think more deeply about life, about ourselves, and about others. Now that busyness is gone we must take the time to teach about God and His Church to those who are younger and will follow us.

Change is an inevitable part of life. We're being shaped every minute we live. Every thought, every decision, every action, every emotion, every response is shaping us into one kind of person or another. Either we're moving toward Christ and holiness or away from Him into some sort of caricature of a Christian.

It's true, we lose some things as we age: physical strength, quickness, agility. But think of the things we have gained! The calm God gives us, the peace He leaves us, the benefits of His salvation and His faithfulness to us are all blessings.

Take the time in old age to grow in grace and godliness, in inner strength and beauty of character. The wise man said: "The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16:31)

LIGHTER MOMENT

The Sunday School teacher brought up her students to the creche, which was displayed in the church. She asked them to identify the different pieces as she recounted the story of the Nativity. When she picked up the robed wise men, who were carrying their urns filled with the gifts for the Christ Child, she asked: And who are these people?" One small child quickly piped up: "These are the ladies bringing the coffee for coffee hour."

Undique (from everywhere)

The Orthodox greeting for the Nativity of Christ is "Christ is Born!" not "Happy Holiday" while the response is "Glorify Him!"

According to the Word of God, faith and works are of equal importance. Neither one is given preference over the other. Faith without works and works without faith are pointless. Only the two joined together build up our salvation.

Our people in Europe and especially our immigrant ancestors considered bread to be sacred. They never threw away any, not even the crumbs. If a piece of bread fell on the floor, they would pick it up and kiss it. It was considered sacrilegious to walk over bread. It was always picked up and used to feed the birds. How more so with the prosphora – the blessed bread from the church.

The primary place for prayer for the Orthodox is his home and with his family. His home is church. This is where he repents, prays, fasts, reads spiritual writings, blesses food and his surroundings, so that he may go out into the world to preach and teach the Gospel, not generally with words, but by example – always seeking to do God's will. Then he gathers on Sundays with other Christians representing all their little home churches, to prepare for and then fulfill the Lord's command: "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Orthodoxy has remained strong against the acids of modernity that have dissolved the sense of God's mystery and majesty.

The English word digital comes from the word digit, which refers to a finger on our hand. Jesus used His hands to bring hope and healing. He touched the sick, held little children, broke bread for hungry people, and allowed His hands to be nailed to the Cross for our sins. When our hearts are humble and our hands are yielded to Him, the Lord transmits His gospel to others through our human touch of love.

Editor's Notes

Lagging behind spiritually? Speed up! Still behind? Try harder! Go faster! Get more involved! Push yourself – run – keep on the go. You've got too much invested to slow down. To stop now would be to lose ground you've gained, right? Wrong! The Bible says that being effective for the Lord comes from knowing how to slow down and wait on the Lord. The Church gives this time before His Nativity just for that. It is the time of Advent. To get ahead, we must slow down and wait on the Lord. As we do, we will have time to pray, to read God's Word, and to rearrange our priorities. Then we'll truly experience the meaning of Christmas.

We recently had a fire in the Hunlock Creek Post Office. The personnel from our post office have been given space in one nearby and will remain there until a new building is built for Hunlock Creek mail.

This is the time of year when you are looking for ideas for gifts. Why not consider a subscription to The Orthodox Herald? We don't have an advertising budget, as we are trying to keep costs down, so we do rely on you to do our advertising for us!

I want to commend Anne Marie Carvey Piotrowski, who sponsored the Packet Plan as a gift to her parish in Cherry Hill, NJ. She is originally from Mayfield, PA and typed the weekly bulletin for Fr. Basil when he was assigned to her parish.

I attended a conference recently and was asked by one of the participants if I went to an Amen Parish. Since this was an unfamiliar classification, I asked her what she meant by the term. It seems that there are several parishes in the OCA who have started the practice of yelling Amen during the consecration of the Gifts. This practice seems to be spreading. No, I do not attend an Amen Parish. Looking into this, I was surprised to find that the practice seems to have taken hold in many old established parishes made up of "cradle" Orthodox. I don't know where it was started or why.

I was surprised to find five Hanyas reprinted in the Rusyn-American Almanac of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society 2004-2005 10th Anniversary Year. It's a beautiful calendar made to resemble the old kalendars, which have a bit of this and that. Something about the society, Rusyn culture, history, cooking, a calendar and Rusyn language section. It is highly recommended as a keepsake. Send a check for $27 to Almanac, Carpatho-Rusyn Society, 125 Westland Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Phone 412-462-2769. It would make an unusual gift.

Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!

Matushka Nina Stroyen

BIBLE QUIZ

1. What was the name of the angel who appeared to Mary and Zacharias?
2. What kinsman of Christ was ordained to be His forerunner?
3. What psalm, usually assumed to have been written by David, talks about God knowing him before his birth?
4. Who foretold Jesus' birth and ministry to Mary?
5. How was Joseph told about Jesus' miraculous conception?
6. Who said: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of Israel."?
7. Who said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord."?

ANSWERS:
1. Gabriel (Luke 1:5-38)
2. John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17)
3. Psalm 139
4. The angel Gabriel (Luke 1:26-38)
5. In a dream (Matthew 1:18-21)
6. Simeon (Luke 2:34)
7. Mary (Luke 1:46)

LIGHTER MOMENT

A woman lost her purse in the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping. An honest boy found it and seeing her identification in it returned it to her. The grateful woman opened her purse and looked for her wallet planning to give the lad a reward. She exclaimed: "That's funny. When I lost my purse I had a $20 bill in it. Now I see 20 one dollar bills."

The boy quickly replied. "I made sure that you had some change so that you could give me a reward."



Computers have made research into genealogy so much easier. Some of our family have been researching our family history and, even though not complete, it has answered many puzzling questions. My father always talked about St. Lucy about this time of year. We often wondered why was she one of his favorite saints? While visiting Sweden, we found a whole province the same as our last name. Now, thanks to the computer, we find that indeed our ancestors came as warriors to the section of Bylorus from which our father came to America. Perhaps, this is why my mother always made this gingerbread in an angel food cake pan to resemble the crown used in a traditional rite in Sweden on St. Lucy's Day. My sister found the recipe on a spattered recipe card and made it recently. She said all the taste-testers on Hazle Street liked it, especially the men. She made it in a bundt pan. Try this as a change from fruit cake. It keeps well.

ST. LUCY'S GINGERBREAD CAKE

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teas. baking powder
1 teas. salt
1 Tbls. ground ginger
1 teas. ground cinnamon
1/2 teas. ground cloves
12 Tbls. unsalted butter, room temperature
2/3 cup sugar
2 large eggs, beaten
1 cup molasses
2 teas. baking soda
1 cup boiling water

GLAZE
2 cups confectioner sugar
2 Tbls. lemon juice or vanilla
1/3 cup chopped crystallized ginger

Preheat oven to 350°. On middle rack in oven, place a cookie sheet to heat. Grease bundt or angel food pan. In a medium bowl, mix flour, baking

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THE PROPHET ISAIAH

The prophet Isaiah prophesied especially with clearness about the Lord Our Saviour, and namely that He will be born of a virgin. That before He comes there will appear in the wilderness a Forerunner who will be preparing the people for His reception. That He (the Lord Saviour) will be God and man. That He will commence His preaching in Galilee. How humble and merciful He will be. What He will teach. That He will perform miracles. That He will suffer for the sins of the people. About His victory over death and the devil, and the call into the Church of the heathens.

At the same time the prophet, by his entreaties, delivered the Hebrews from God's anger.

His glorious life was ended by a martyr's death: for reproving the wicked King Manassia for his idoltry. He was cut to death with a wooden saw.

from "Instruction in God's Law"

APOCRYPHA

This is a Greek word which means "hidden things." It generally applies to certain Jewish and Christian writings which the Holy Fathers rejected from the canon or books which would be included in the Bible. However, there are a few books called "deuterocanonical books," which are not found in Hebrew writings or in the Bible used by the Protestants but which are considered as part of the Bible by the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. These are, for example, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, and the two books of Maccabees.

Home Bible Reading Schedule

DECEMBER 2005

1. 1 Thess 5:1-8
2. 1 Thess 5:9-13,24-28
3. 2 Cor 11:1-16
4. **Eph 2:14-22**
5. 2 Thess 1:1-10
6. 2 Thess 1:10-2:2
7. 2 Thess 2:1-12
8. 2 Thess 2:13-3:5
9. 2 Thess 3:6-18
10. Gal 1:3-10
11. **Col 3:4-11**
12. 1 Tim 1:1-7
13. 1 Tim 1:8-114
14. 1 Tim 1:18-20, 2:8-15
15. 1 Tim 3:1-13
16. 1 Tim 4:4-8, 16
17. Gal 3:8-12
18. **Eph 5:9-19**
19. 1 Tim 5:1-10
20. 1 Tim 5:11-21
21. 1 Tim 5:22-6:11
22. 1 Tim 6:17-21
23. 2 Tim 1:1-2,8-18
24. Gal 5:22-6:2
25. **Gal 4:4-7**
26. 2 Tim 2:20-26
27. 2 Tim 3:16-4:4
28. 2 Tim 4:9-22
29. Titus 1:5-2:1
30. Titus 1:15-2:10
31. 1 Tim 6:11-16

BIBLE STUDY

Over 400 years before Christ was born, the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates believed that if you are truly wise you will not be obsessed with possessions. Practicing to an extreme what he preached, he even refused to wear shoes.

Socrates loved to visit the marketplace, though, and gaze with admiration at the great abundance of wares on display. When a friend asked him why he was so allured, he replied: "I love to go there and discover how many things I am perfectly happy without."

That type of attitude runs counter to the commercial messages that continually bombard our eyes and ears today, especially at this time of year. Advertisers are spending millions to tell us about the latest products that we can't be happy without and which we must buy for someone to impress them.

In his letter to his spiritual son, Timothy, the apostle Paul advised him: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. ...having food and clothing let us be content ...But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and hurtful lusts ...for the love of money is the root of all evil ...charge them that are rich in this world that they be not highminded, ...that they do good, be rich in good works laying up a good foundation that they may hold on eternal life." (1 Tim 6:6-10,17-19)

All of us have too many things - stuff. We shop just to shop. Perhaps, we should ask ourselves: "What am I truly happy without?" Contentment comes not from great wealth but from few wants.

LIGHTER MOMENT

For the first time in many years, an old man went to see a movie. After buying his ticket, he stopped at the concession stand to purchase some popcorn.

Handing the young attendant $2.50, he couldn't help but comment: "The last time I came to the movies, popcorn was only 25 cents."

"Well, sir," the young attendant said with a grin, "you're really going to enjoy yourself. We have sound now."